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ABSTRACT

This book is about life on the Crow Indian Reservation from around 1910 to the present and is based on the personal experiences of Donnie and Agnes Deernose. Following Donnie's death, Agnes became the principal narrator of the book. The Crow Indian Reservation is situated between Billings, Montana, and Sheridan, Wyoming. More so than any other Plains tribe, the Crow succeeded in developing a reservation culture that preserved traditional core beliefs, values, social relations, and mutual obligations, while conforming to the formal demands of dress, schooling, church, and legalisms of the local American culture. The narrative reveals the hardships faced within the reservation system as the Crow struggled to overcome the restrictions of limited resources and tried to achieve a secure, independent, and personally satisfying economic existence. Both Donnie and Agnes reflect the profound influence of their fathers, who warned them what the future held for Crow youth without educational skills in a world increasingly ruled by the invading Americans. In the course of his life, Donnie followed the traditional role of men as spiritual leaders, protectors, and providers. He did so through active participation in the Baptist mission church and by learning skills, working hard, and efficiently managing his cattle ranching business. He also dedicated himself to the welfare of his people by actively participating in political and economic affairs. Agnes followed the traditional role expectations of women while making the Baptist church a dominant force and guide for her life. The lives of both Donnie and Agnes emphasize the continuing importance of religion in sustaining traditional Crow values during the forcible transition to the values and rules of American culture. Chapter 5 is entitled "School, Education, and Church". Includes photographs, a bibliography, and an index. (LP)

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